



# THE PHANTOM



LEONARDI  
&  
WUSLIN

Mike Bullock  
Silvestre Szilagyi

# THE PHANTOM

created by LEE FALK

**"CHECKMATE"**  
PART THREE OF FIVE

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SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR PHANTOM CONSULTANT  
**ED RHOADES**

AND TO **KAREN MOY** AT KING FEATURES

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THE DEEP  
WOODS.





GGRRRRRIIINNNGGGG

SNAAPP!!

FWRSSHHHH-FRSSHH

PREPARE TO  
ENGAGE!



THERE! DID  
YOU SEE  
THAT?

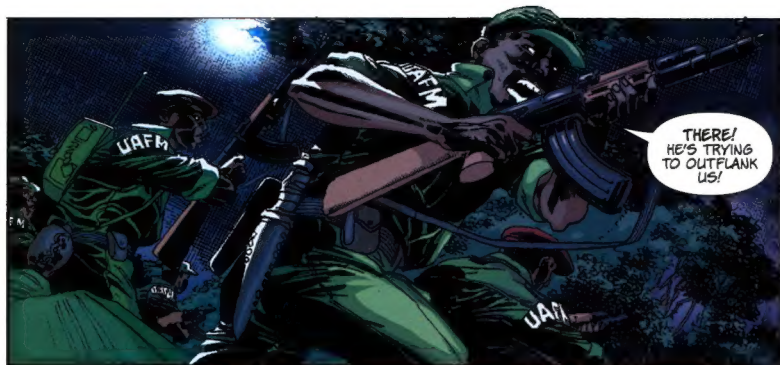


FIRE!

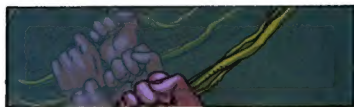
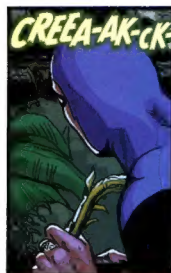
THESE WOODS  
ARE SACRED GROUND.  
IF YOU DO NOT  
LEAVE, THEY WILL  
COME TO LIFE AND  
SWALLOW YOU  
WHOLE!

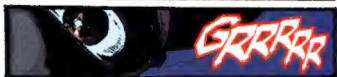


RATA TAT TAT TAT  
RATA TAT













LAMANDA, I MUST INSIST YOU POSTPONE YOUR SPEECH UNTIL WE CAN CONTAIN THESE INCIDENTS AND ASSURE YOUR SAFETY.

MY FRIEND, I APPRECIATE YOUR CONCERN, BUT IT HAS NOT BECOME SO BAD THAT I NEED TO RUN AND HIDE.

...REPORTS CONTINUE TO COME IN OF RIOTS AND CIVIL UNREST THROUGHOUT MAWITAAN - WE INTERRUPT THIS REPORT TO BRING YOU THIS BREAKING NEWS.

AN ARMED INCURSION OF THE UNITED AFRICAN FREEDOM MILITIA HAS CROSSED THE UGANDAN BORDER INTO BANGALA. WITH OUR COUNTRY IN THE GRIP OF THE CURRENT UNREST--

COULD THIS BE THE UAFM'S FIRST STRIKE IN AN EFFORT TO OVERTHROW PRESIDENT LUAGA'S REGIME?



WE MUST CONSIDER OUR NEXT MOVE CAREFULLY. ONE MISSTEP CAN UPSET THIS HOUSE OF CARDS AND LEAVE THOUSANDS OF LIVES IN HARM'S WAY.

THIS IS NO TIME FOR INTROSPECTION, LAMANDA. WE MUST ACT NOW!

SAY THE WORD AND LOGU WILL MOBILIZE OUR TROOPS TO MASS ON THE UGANDAN BORDER AND KEEP THE UAFM AT BAY WHILE WE STABILIZE THE COUNTRY.

IF WE CAN KEEP OURSELVES ISOLATED FROM OUTSIDE INFLUENCE, IT WILL BE FAR EASIER TO QUELL THESE RIOTS.

ALL RIGHT. SEND THE TROOPS.



HOWEVER, I WILL DELIVER MY SPEECH AS PLANNED. WE CANNOT GIVE THE APPEARANCE THAT THESE REBELS HAVE INTIMIDATED US.

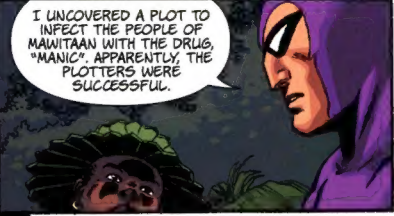
THE PEOPLE MUST KNOW HOW WE PLAN TO HANDLE THE CIVIL UNREST AND THESE UAFM REBELS. THEN WE MUST SHOW THEM THAT PALMER-WALKER'S PLAN FOR ECONOMIC STRENGTH DID NOT DIE WITH HER.







...THE DRUMS  
TELL OF BROTHER  
AGAINST BROTHER IN  
THE STREETS OF  
MAWITAAN.



I UNCOVERED A PLOT TO  
INFECT THE PEOPLE OF  
MAWITAAN WITH THE DRUG,  
"MANIC". APPARENTLY, THE  
PLOTTERS WERE  
SUCCESSFUL.



LET ME  
HANDLE  
THAT.



GHOST WHO WALKS,  
PRESIDENT LUAGA HAS  
CALLED A MEETING ON  
THE STEPS OF HIS  
GREAT HOUSE IN  
MAWITAAN.



THE PRESS  
CONFERENCE...

HE WANTS  
TO SPEAK OF  
WAR, DUTY--



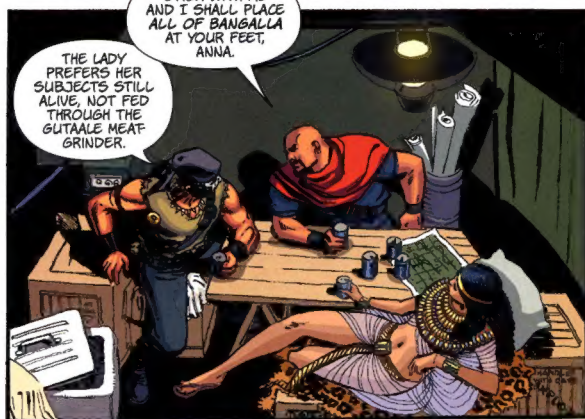
AND LOVE...



YOU MUST  
GO, PHANTOM. THE  
CHILDREN WILL BE  
SAFE HERE.

RIGHT NOW, IT'S  
ABOUT THE ONLY  
SAFE PLACE IN ALL  
OF BANGALLA. BUT  
WHAT ABOUT THE  
MANIC?

LEAVE  
SUCH THINGS  
TO THOSE WHO  
UNDERSTAND  
THEM BEST...



THE LADY PREFERS HER SUBJECTS STILL ALIVE, NOT FED THROUGH THE GUTAILE MEAT GRINDER.

STICK WITH ME  
AND I SHALL PLACE  
ALL OF BANGALLA  
AT YOUR FEET,  
ANNA.



YOU TWO  
QUARREL LIKE  
LITTLE BOYS.  
KEEP YOUR MINDS  
ON THE TASK AT  
HAND.



MY EYES AND  
MY HEART ARE  
ALWAYS ON THE  
PRIZE.



GOOD.



NOW, LET US DISCUSS  
BUSINESS. THIS INVASION,  
ALBEIT SHORTLIVED, HAS  
PROVIDED AN AMPLE  
DISTRACTION.

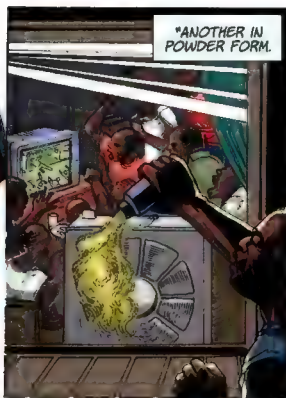


AND I'VE  
SOWN THE SEEDS  
OF DISTRUST IN THE  
BANGALLAN CITIES  
BY INTRODUCING  
THE CITIZENS  
TO MANIC.





"I'VE CREATED THE MANIC IN THREE FORMS. ONE IS WATER SOLUBLE.



"ANOTHER IN POWDER FORM.



"AND THE FINAL IN AEROSOL FORM.



"THE AEROSOL, UNFORTUNATELY, IS NOT VERY ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY, I'M AFRAID.



HOWEVER, WHEN COMBINED WITH SUBLIMINAL MESSAGES, IT HAS A DECIDEDLY VIOLENT AFFECT.



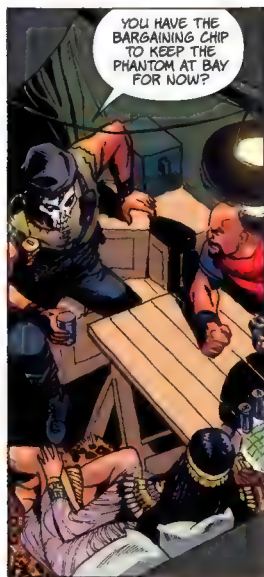
THIS IS THE NEWEST THING FROM MOROCCO. IT'S CALLED MANIC AND LUAGA AND THE GOVERNMENT HAVE BEEN TRYING TO KEEP THIS FROM YOU FOR YEARS...

"AND, OF COURSE, THERE'S STILL THE ORIGINAL FORMULA..."



THIS IS ALL LUAGA'S FAULT. HE'S SELLING US OUT TO THE WESTERNERS SO HE CAN GET RICH WHILE WE ALL STARVE TO DEATH!

...IT'S GOING JUST AS YOU PLANNED, MANUEL. CARLOS WOULD BE PROUD.



YOU HAVE THE BARGAINING CHIP TO KEEP THE PHANTOM AT BAY FOR NOW?



OF COURSE. THE TRAP IS BAITED AND THE PHANTOM WON'T STAND A CHANCE.

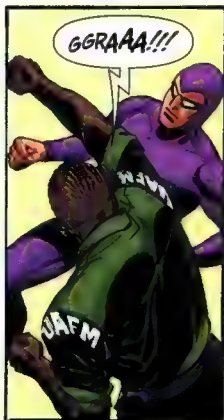
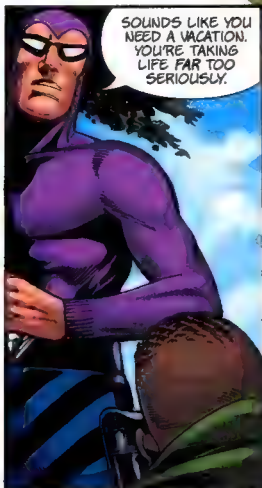
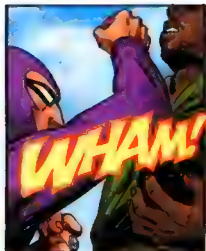


GOOD. NOW IT'S TIME TO TAKE THIS TO THE NEXT LEVEL.

THE PHANTOM WILL NEVER KNOW WHAT HIT HIM.

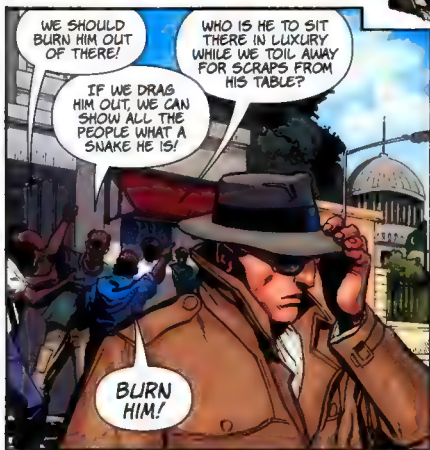










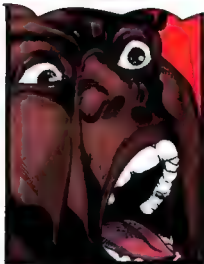


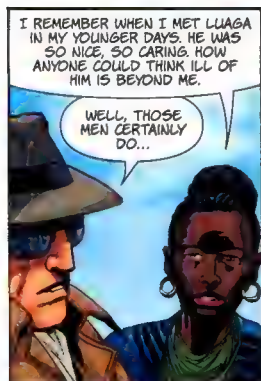
DOWN WITH LUAGA!

DOWN WITH LUAGA!

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DOWN WITH LUAGA!

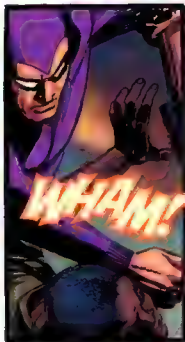
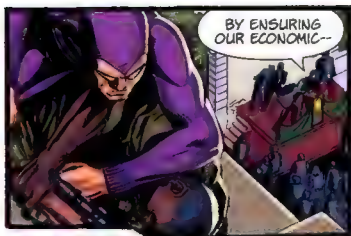




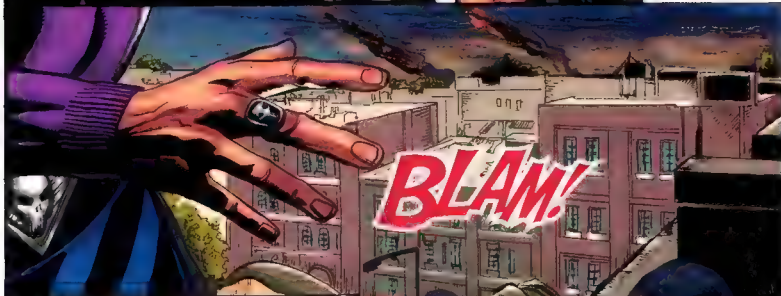
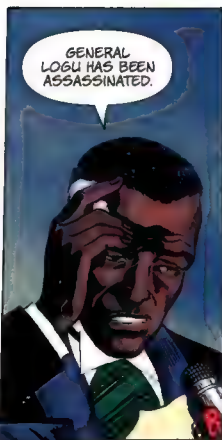
















TELL ME WHO SENT YOU OR YOUR NEXT "HIT" WILL BE YOUR SKULL ON THE PAVEMENT.

NICE TRY. EVERYONE KNOWS YOU DON'T KILL, PHANTOM!



DON'T BET ON IT.

ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT!

WHO?!



HE SAID HIS NAME WAS SINGH...

WHAT ELSE?

**GRAAARRR!**



YOU BETTER NOT BE REACHING FOR A GUN.

NO, JUST THIS.



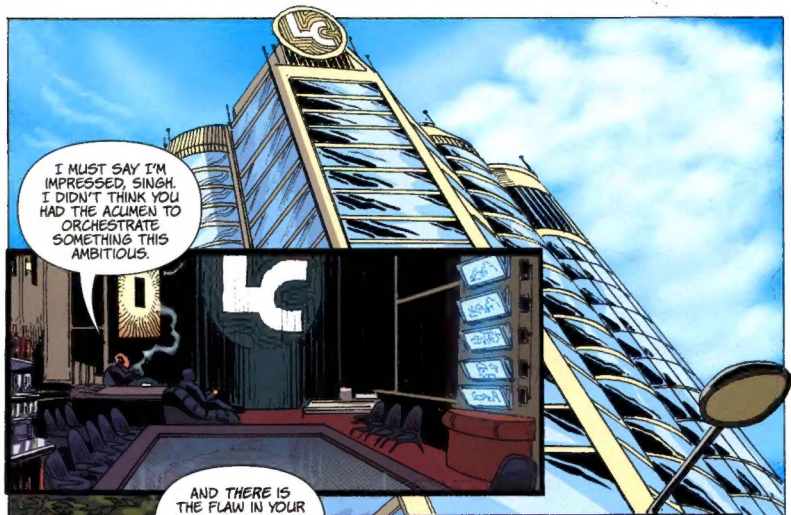
HE'S NOT A DOG, HE'S A WOLF. DEVIL, GUARD HIM UNTIL THE POLICE GET UP HERE.

THAT DOG DOESN'T BITE, DOES HE?



IF I'M NOT BACK SOON, FEEL FREE TO EAT HIM.





I MUST SAY I'M IMPRESSED, SINGH. I DIDN'T THINK YOU HAD THE ACUMEN TO ORCHESTRATE SOMETHING THIS AMBITIOUS.

AND THERE IS THE FLAW IN YOUR SKILL SET, LOCKE, YOU ONLY SEE RESULTS, NOT POTENTIAL.

THERE IS SOMETHING TO BE SAID FOR THAT, BUT EVEN THE MOST SOPHISTICATED COMPUTATIONS CAN'T SEEM TO FACTOR THAT IN.

RESULTS ARE TANGIBLE.

THIS— IS TANGIBLE.

AND NOW THAT WE'VE REACHED THE END, WHAT IS YOUR NEXT MOVE, MY FRIEND?

IT'S TIME TO CALL IN THE CLEAN UP CREW...

**To Be Continued...**

# BEHIND THE MASK

*By Ed Rhoades*

The US Code of Federal Regulations defines terrorism as "...the unlawful use of force and violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives."

The concept of terrorism has evolved dramatically from its early definition. Originally, its denotation included legitimate use of violence such as civilians against an invader as exemplified in Lee Falk's story of the justified resistance of the natives in the Japanese invasion of the jungle in the wartime story sometimes titled "The Inexorables." Today, its connotation is generally regarded by the general public, who are at risk, as less than noble.

On a global level, acts of terrorism have been around for ages but without such a significant impact upon the lives of US citizens as it has since 9/11.

Lee Falk had a summer home in Cape Cod away from the beaten path, but the rest of the year he lived in Manhattan. He died before 9/11, and we can only imagine what his reactions would have been to the tragedy. But his Phantom was a global character influenced by world events and he understood the threat of terrorism well and addressed it in his writing.

The last story Lee worked on involved terrorists carrying a suitcase of nuclear material. Sadly, he was unable to complete the story and his wife Elizabeth finished it employing her knowledge of opera resulting in a showdown with the terrorists at the Met. It was said that Mrs. Falk referred to his notes, but exactly how much of the ending was influenced by Lee himself is unclear. However, the use of foreign terrorists working on US soil in Phantom stories was ahead of the curve.

In "The Plotters" in 1993, Lee's story follows terrorists to Baltimore where they plan to carry explosives to Washington DC to bomb the White House. Their scheme, of course, is thwarted by the Ghost Who Walks.

After 9/11, in the Friends of the Phantom fanzine, we did a tribute to the fight against terrorism, which included collaboration between syndicated daily penciller, Keith Williams and me in which the Phantom dispatches Asama bin Ladin. Many other artists contributed to the cause.

Keith spoke to me about watching the smoke and debris on 9/11 from his home in Brooklyn. A drawing he made of the Phantom working side by side with real life heroes... a policeman and a fireman hung at a police station near ground zero.

Lee's stories were influenced by both classic literature and world events. He wrote a story about Uranium claim jumpers in the 50's, one about astronauts in the 60's, and in later years, he even had one that featured a villain resembling Idi Amin. It is more than likely that he would have continued to address the problems of terrorism in his stories. Like Mike Bullock's efforts for Moonstone, Lee's stories strived to edify as well as entertain.

